

# Key

## WORKFORCE ISSUES

Serving the Hispanic population  
Montgomery teachers are tops in tech ed

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Bimonthly publication of the Cabinet for Workforce Development

### Lose the paper

Filing unemployment insurance taxes on Web saves paper, time

by Kim Saylor Brannock, Staff Writer



Milton Dean of Dean Accounting Services in Fulton became the first Kentucky employer to go "paperless" when he recently filed and paid his quarterly unemployment tax using the Department for Employment Services' new tax filing Web site. The site provides Kentucky employers a convenient and secure alternative to mailing paper reports and checks.

Milton said he decided to try the electronic method of filing and paying taxes because it was efficient and economic. He said the transaction went smoothly and was simple and easy to use. After using the new electronic filing and payment method, Milton is encouraging his clients to use the system and has already had some sign up for the service.

"Employers should consider filing electronically. It is timely filed and received. It saves money and additional interaction with the government," Milton said.

The Web site is the latest development from Kentucky's Electronic Workplace for Employment Services (KEWES) in


the Department for Employment Services, a Cabinet for Workforce Development agency.

"The addition of the electronic payment feature of KEWES allows employers to pay their quarterly unemployment taxes by computer. Now employers can save time and money by submitting quarterly unemployment wage and tax reports and payments on-line," said Jim Thompson, commissioner of the Department for Employment Services.

"Employers can continue to file by paper, but this gives businesses an alternative," added Thompson.

Taxes are paid on-line through electronic funds transfers provided by Global Payment Systems.

"For employers concerned about the security of the electronic payment system ... we have taken every precaution to make transactions confidential and tamper proof. Employers register on-line with our provider and are given an identification number and password," Thompson said.

Employers can register for the service at [www.desky.org](http://www.desky.org) on the Internet. 

### In the top five

Cabinet agencies' vocational rehabilitation services rank fifth in first comprehensive national study

by Mary Ann Scott, Managing Editor

Vocational rehabilitation services provided by two Cabinet for Workforce Development departments were ranked fifth in the nation in a recent study.

Services provided by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Department for the Blind (DFB) were rated in a Journal of Rehabilitation Administration article.

Derived from 1998 figures, the most recent data available to the researcher, the rankings resulted from several measures, including the percentage of all consumers who retained a job or gained employment; the average cost of services (assistive devices, transportation and/or education or training purchased for consumers) and the percentage of consumers who were earning wages above the poverty line.

Nearly 70 percent of all DVR and DFB consumers retained work or attained employment and 71 percent of them were earning wages above the poverty line.

The average cost of purchased services was \$3,216 per consumer. Examples of purchased services include financial assistance with education or training, or assistive technology, such as a computer with large print capability for a person with a visual impairment.

"We're very proud that the vocational services provided by our department and the DFB, which we team with in many efforts, were ranked so highly," said DVR Commissioner Sam Serraglio.

DFB Commissioner Denise Placido echoed a similar sentiment. "We're pleased that the study

showed that we're performing our mission and doing it cost effectively," said Placido.

Serraglio also pointed to a 2000 report issued by the DVR, which shows the department has continued its successful trend.

In 2000, 78 percent of individuals who obtained jobs with the help of the DVR were unemployed when they first came to the department for services.

"Our department helped 4,975 individuals with disabilities meet their vocational goals this past fiscal year, more than the fiscal year before," said Serraglio.


"What makes this accomplishment even more impressive," added Serraglio, "is the fact that the DVR spent \$4 million less on purchased services than in the previous fiscal year."

Serraglio said what is often forgotten is the fact that when people with disabilities work, the tax base grows.

"Earnings increased for nearly 5,000 of DVR's consumers last year, which generated an estimated \$22 million in additional tax revenues for the year," Serraglio noted.

Placido said that DFB consumers who were successfully employed last year will pay an estimated \$15.5 million in federal, state and Social Security taxes in their lifetimes.

"Fifty-two of the 371 consumers who achieved their employment goals last year earned enough money to stop drawing Social Security benefits.

"The Social Security Administration presented the DFB with a national award for that achievement," added Placido. 



Students at the DVR's Perkins Center receive physical rehabilitation and vocational training.

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## Speaking their language

Cabinet services adapt to meet the needs of customers who speak little or no English

by Janet Williams Hoover, Kim Saylor Brannock and Mary Ann Scott

To enhance its services to the public, the Cabinet for Workforce Development has adopted a philosophy of "continuous improvement." Simply defined, this means staff members are always looking for ways to improve services and how those services are delivered to customers.

One example of this philosophy is an attempt to meet the needs of customers who may speak little or no English. Over the past decade, Kentucky's population has become more diverse than ever. The Hispanic population in the commonwealth has nearly tripled — from 22,000 in 1990 to 60,000 in 2000.

The Hispanic population is still relatively small, making up only 1.5 percent of the total state population. However, job opportunity is one of the principal reasons people move to the United States, so the cabinet's field offices and technical schools are increasingly serving customers who do not have a mastery of the English language.

Here are some ways the agencies are responding.

### Wireless transmissions

The Department for Training and ReEmployment's Rapid Response Team travels to workplaces undergoing layoffs.

The team meets with affected employees to provide information about employment and training opportunities, unemployment insurance and other resources.

The team recently added two staff members, Tracey Doyle and Will Robinson, who are fluent in Spanish.

When these meetings are attended by a mix of English and Spanish speakers, Doyle and Robinson can use wireless equipment to transmit a Spanish version of the proceedings to Hispanic attendees who listen on headsets. The special equipment

was purchased by the department. They can also answer specific questions one-on-one with Hispanic workers.

The department's Web site, <http://otr.state.ky.us/>, is offered in English and Spanish.

### Employment resources for migrant workers

The Department for Employment Services has five staff fluent in Spanish to assist Hispanic customers and help in any local office when an interpreter is needed.

The department is also working to translate forms into Spanish.

In addition, staff member Jody Hughes assists migrant and seasonal workers with issues concerning compensation and housing. Hughes also works to educate employers about migrant worker labor standards and rights and serves as a resource for employers on these topics.

### Spanish-speaking devices

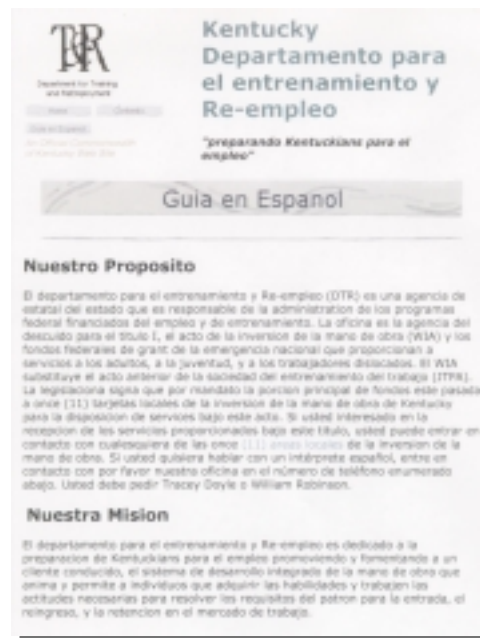
The Department for the Blind is translating various forms and brochures into Spanish.

The department provides independent living aids, such as talking calculators and clocks, to people who are visually impaired. These devices are available in English and Spanish.

### English as a second language

The Department for Adult Education and Literacy funds English as a Second Language (ESL) classes through adult learning centers across the state. Currently, 3,720 students are enrolled in ESL classes in 56 counties.

The department also provides ESL classes in the workplace upon request. Employers who would like information about workplace ESL classes should call Jim Thompson at (502) 564-5114.



The Department for Training and ReEmployment's Web site has a page describing the department's services that is translated into Spanish.

### Immersed in the culture

Through a federal grant, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation is sending several employees to Mexico over the next four years for an intense immersion program in the Hispanic language and culture. Shannon Moler and Donna Osburn recently spent five weeks in the program.

They studied Spanish and each lived with a Mexican family, who conversed with Moler and Osburn in Spanish. They not only honed their language skills but also acquired a better feel for the culture.

A Spanish language instructor from Mexico is in Lexington to conduct accelerated Spanish classes for certain counselors and job placement professionals in the department's Lexington, Winchester, Georgetown and Florence offices.

In January, some in the class will be the next group of department employees to go to Mexico for the immersion program.

The department's consumer guide and other publications for the public are available in English and Spanish.

### Bilingual students help

The Department for Technical Education offers classes through 52 area technology centers at high schools in Kentucky.

To serve Hispanic students, some schools have secured textbooks in Spanish. Shelby County Area Technology Center Principal Debbie Anderson said, "It is difficult to work through the language barriers ... but the biggest key to (Hispanics) being successful is having bilingual students matched up with them in classes."



Department of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor Donna Osburn, right, was involved in an immersion program in Mexico. She sits with Magdalena Nunez, the matriarch of her host family.



As part of an immersion program, Shannon Moler spent time not only boning up on Spanish but participating in Mexican activities, like painting pottery. Moler is a Department of Vocational Rehabilitation counselor.

## One school, two top teachers

One Montgomery school employs two educators who recently received top tech ed honors

by Mary Ann Scott, Managing Editor

Montgomery County Area Technology Center (ATC) boasts not one, but two teachers who have earned top technical education honors.

The center employs this year's Department of Technical Education's (DTE) Kentucky Tech Teacher of the Year, Ronda Bowles, and the department's Beginning Teacher of the Year, Angela Barker.

Bowles has spent her 14-year teaching career at the center. She is an office technology teacher who instructs word processing, multi-media publishing and a leadership development class. She is also the school's cooperative education coordinator.

"Students can co-op at a business or industry of interest for two or three hours of the school day and see if this is what they really want to do," said Bowles. "It also reinforces what they learn in the classroom."

When the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) wanted to set up a small-scale printing company, Bowles, the FBLA advisor, and another business teacher took out an \$8,000 start-up loan from a bank in order to establish the enterprise.

However, the students, through the printing company, had to repay the loan. "The students have printed posters, banners ...

they've made programs for the community and businesses. They paid back the loan, with interest, in two years," said Bowles.

Barker, who is also an office technology teacher at the center, instructs her students in Web design, keyboarding applications, two levels of financial services' classes, and a micro-computer operating systems class.

One of her students' biggest projects is the Bank of the Tribe.

"It's a student-run bank. Anita Mann, another business teacher,

and I advise the students who run it," said Barker. "The bank has a loan department, new accounts department, a marketing department ... students, teachers

and staff are the customers."

Students, who train for four weeks in order to work at the bank, must maintain tight controls. "At the end of the day, tellers must balance their drawers, and auditors must check those balances," Barker explained.

Like Bowles, Barker, who has taught three years, is very enthusiastic about matching up students with interests and, in turn, plugging them into the community.

"My Web page design class has designed sites for a local church, flower shop and will do one for the local Kiwanis this fall," said Barker.

**"We have such a tremendous base with our employers here. And our students have a good reputation (with them)."**

**Ronda Bowles, Kentucky Tech Teacher of the Year**



Ronda Bowles, the Department of Technical Education's Kentucky Tech Teacher of the Year, assists student Matt Rogers.

Both teachers are happy that local business and industry have been very supportive of the school.

"We have such a tremendous base with our employers here," said Bowles. "And our students have a good reputation (with them) ... my students have allowed me to push them to levels where they can grow."

When the school year is done, Bowles says she hopes her students understand the meaning of

teamwork and will have developed a sense of devotion to work.

Barker tries to instill organizational skills and time management techniques throughout the academic year.

For more information about Montgomery County ATC and student projects, visit [www.montgomery.k12.ky.us/mcatc](http://www.montgomery.k12.ky.us/mcatc). The school's award-winning FBLA Web site address is [www.montgomery.k12.ky.us/fbla](http://www.montgomery.k12.ky.us/fbla).



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Angela Barker, the Department of Technical Education's Beginning Teacher of the Year, checks in with students Mandi Orme and Kyler Ballard.



## Food service vendor typifies commitment to work, customer service

by Kim Saylor Brannock,  
Staff Writer

Customer service is the cornerstone of Mary Hawkins' vending machine business at Central Kentucky Technical College in Lexington, where stocking the 30 machines in four buildings keeps her on her toes.

"I can't say enough about customer service. My customer is my top priority. When they talk, I listen. When they have questions, I try to answer them," Hawkins said.

She is one of 61 vendor and food services operators in the Department for the Blind's Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE).

KBE is a federal program that trains and certifies Kentuckians who are legally blind in food services and licenses them to operate vending and food facilities.

In addition to Hawkins' site, KBE vendors operate the 32 cafeterias for the military at Fort Knox and Fort Campbell, run five vending locations at Kentucky rest stops, and operate locations at state and federal buildings and private companies.

Even before her eight-week training at the Charles McDowell Center in Louisville, Hawkins had

a sense of what it takes to run a successful business. For 13 years, she and a partner owned a florist shop in Georgetown.

After Hawkins began losing peripheral vision because of an eye disease, she sold her share of the business to her partner. She decided to try KBE when her rehabilitation counselor told her about the opportunity.

Hawkins knows there may be employers that are reluctant to hire KBE vendors, because they don't know how a blind person can do the job. "We have strict guidelines and we have to be accountable. It's a top-notch program."

Hawkins spends 40-50 hours a week on her business. A licensed vendor since 1996, Hawkins buys the inventory, stocks the machines, does some minor maintenance on the machines and handles paperwork.

Hawkins has developed a good working relationship with the staff, teachers and students at the campus and believes that has contributed to her success. "I feel like the school appreciates me being here. I think they know that I work hard ... I appreciate their patronage."

"It's a positive experience for us and for her," said Karen Phillips, secretary to CKTC president. "She is very reliable, very customer oriented and very congenial."

Hawkins said the opportunity to run a business at CKTC has been a blessing.

"I don't think I could have a better working environment," said Hawkins.

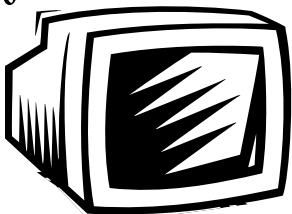
Employers interested in establishing a KBE vendor in their business should call Stephen Johnson at (502) 564-4754 or toll-free at 1-800-321-6668.



**"My customer is my top priority. When they talk, I listen." — Mary Hawkins, food vendor**

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